

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 27, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Saul  
Commissioner  
Social Security Administration  
6401 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore MD, 21207

Dear Commissioner Saul,

We write on behalf of the more than hundreds of thousands of Social Security beneficiaries in our districts to encourage the Social Security Administration (SSA) to demonstrate maximum flexibility in implementing arrangements for constituents to submit required documents while field offices remain closed during the pandemic.

As you know, the more than 1,500 Social Security field offices across the country have been closed to the public now for more than a year. Prior to their closures, these offices provided direct services to their communities and to about 800,000 visitors per week. Field offices' flexibility, especially their ability to serve walk-ins, have made them essential resources for their communities and the vulnerable populations they serve.

Field office closures have been a particular hardship for our constituents who need to show original documents – such as driver's licenses, or birth and death certificates – to process their claims. Since individuals cannot show the documents in person, SSA has generally required them to mail the original documents to the field office. This mail-in requirement presents individuals with a stressful dilemma: either they part with their original documents for an indeterminate period of time, or they risk interrupting their claims' processing.

We welcomed the news that SSA has begun piloting different approaches for the public to show their original documents without having to mail them to the field office. Drop boxes, express appointments, and online meetings all have the potential to remedy this hardship without undermining the integrity of a claim's processing procedure.

We recognize that of each of these approaches to submit original documents has distinct advantages and disadvantages, and that each community likely requires a different approach or a combination of approaches to meet its needs. For example, an online appointment may be a practical option in an urban area, but not in a rural area that lacks access to reliable internet. A

drop box does not address the understandable reluctance many individuals have to part with their driver's license for an indeterminate period of time.

With that in mind, please respond to the following at your earliest convenience:

1. How does SSA support field offices' initiatives and flexibility in offering different pilot programs for the submission of original documents?
2. How does SSA evaluate pilot programs' successes at facilitating submissions of original documents without undermining the integrity of the claims' processing?
3. What timeline does SSA envision for expanding the various pilots to closed field offices across the country?
4. When field offices begin to reopen, does SSA plan to maintain these pilot programs for beneficiaries who are unable to visit the field offices in person as well as beneficiaries who appreciate the programs' increased flexibility?

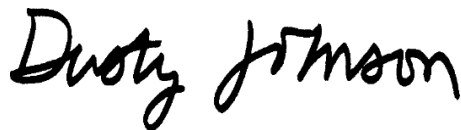
Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. Your swift action on this issue will help alleviate the concerns of millions of Social Security beneficiaries across the country.

Sincerely,



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Abigail D. Spanberger  
Member of Congress



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Dusty Johnson  
Member of Congress



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Lauren Underwood  
Member of Congress



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John Katko  
Member of Congress



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Elise Stefanik  
Member of Congress